



June 2018

## **Update - Social Emotional Learning Curriculum for All**

In today's world, it is more important than ever that schools find ways to focus on developing the whole child, not just the academic needs of our students. Research supports that when schools concentrate on the five key competencies of Social Emotional Learning (SEL), there is a greater likelihood of an increase in academic performance and a decrease in aggressive and emotional incidents. The effectiveness of these results become more probable when school districts implement evidence-based programs. Schools that focus on explicitly teaching students about self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making from an early age will better prepare students for college and beyond.

Last school year, 24 District 118 teachers volunteered to participate in a pilot program aimed to incorporate social emotional learning into daily classroom instruction. The District 118 SEL committee selected three researched-based SEL programs: Calm Classroom, Second Step, and Responsive Classroom. At the end of the year, the committee met to review survey data and discuss all three programs. After thoughtful dialogue and deliberation, the following recommendations were made. Palos East and Palos West will implement the Responsive Classroom Program for all students in grades K-5, and Palos South will implement the Second Step Program for all 6-8 grade students.

Responsive Classroom is a comprehensive program designed around the philosophy of building community within the classroom and throughout the school. The Second Step Middle School Program is a first-of-its-kind SEL curriculum that is modern, web-based, and responsive to the needs of today's students and educators. The middle school version is constructed around themes that teach students about empathy, impulse control, problem solving, dealing with strong emotions, setting goals, etc.

Parents will receive more information from your child's school during the upcoming school year. District 118 is committed to ensuring that quality programs are in place so that all students have the necessary tools to reach their full potential.

## **Palos South & 1:1 Devices**

Next school year, we will be expanding our 1:1 initiative to include all students in grades 6-8 at Palos South. Students will have access to their own Windows enabled tablet both throughout the school day and at home. Teachers will be able to post assignments and additional learning resources through Schoology, our Learning Management System, allowing students and parents to track homework, communicate with teachers, and collaborate with classmates.

To help parents and students with the transition to 1:1, the District 118 Technology Team will host a **virtual** orientation session that will be available in early August. Over the summer, all Palos South parents will receive an email containing a link to the presentation and instructions on

viewing. Parents and students must view the presentation and complete a Signed Agreement Form (for each child in 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade) prior to receiving their device. This presentation can be viewed any time prior to the tablet pick up dates. The presentation will contain general information regarding students using their devices and the Schoology Learning Management System prior to the start of the new school year.

The Technology Team looks forward to working with parents and students as we move forward with the 1:1 initiative. Device pick up will be on Tuesday, August 7 and Thursday, August 9 from 1-3 p.m. and 5-7 p.m. Please mark your calendars.